

***Peter Lopez, Regional Administrator EPA Region 2 [Hurricane Maria]***

○ **DRINKING WATER**

1. Mr. Lopez, how many people remain without access to potable drinking water in Puerto Rico?
  - a. Are they concentrated in any particular place?
  - b. Of the drinking water that is available, has EPA conducted testing to ensure that the drinking water supplies meet the local and federal drinking water standards?
2. Mr. Lopez, your written testimony notes that 20 of 115 drinking water plants are out of service. What is EPA doing to remedy the situation about people not having access to potable water in Puerto Rico?
  - a. Your testimony also states that EPA has helped assess all the drinking water systems not operated by the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority (PRASA) and that EPA is working with FEMA, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the local non-governmental organizations to get the needed repairs – what is the status of these repairs and can you give us an estimated timeline for completion?
  - b. What do you know about PRASA's infrastructure?
3. Mr. Lopez, what about the drinking water situation in the US Virgin Islands – how do things stand there?
  - a. Your written testimony states that EPA has taken over 1,000 drinking water samples and that the information generated is being used to determine where disinfection of systems is needed. What is the status of this assessment? How many sites are impacted?
4. Mr. Lopez, have there been deaths that are caused by, or linked to, water-borne illnesses? If so, how many? What is EPA doing about it?
5. Mr. Lopez, we heard that last week portions of the island had another power outage.

- a. Is the lack of electricity impacting both the ability of the drinking water systems to operate and the ability of residents, who are without access to potable water, to boil water?
  - b. What options is EPA providing to folks to overcome these hurdles?
- 6. Mr. Lopez, how does the financial condition of the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority effect its ability to use Drinking Water Revolving fund monies to address Safe Drinking Water Act compliance needs? Do you have suggestions for fiscally prudent ways to address this matter?
- 7. Mr. Lopez, as I understand it, the Disaster Declarations for Texas, Florida, and the US Virgin Islands are Category A-F. In Puerto Rico, the disaster declaration came out last week and I understand that the designation was moved to Category A-G, including the permanent repair of publicly owned water treatment and delivery systems and sewage collection and treatment facilities.
  - a. Did EPA have any role in finally getting this declaration moved from temporary work to permanent repair work?
  - b. Do you know why Puerto Rico went so long being relegated to only temporary aid?

○ **SUPERFUND SITES**

- 8. Mr. Lopez, can you walk us through the situation regarding the superfund sites on the island of Puerto Rico, specifically we would like to understand the type of sites you are dealing with in terms of contaminants and whether based on the location of the sites, there are any immediate needs with respect to additional evaluation and possibly remediation.
  - a. Your written testimony notes that all the superfund sites in Puerto Rico have been evaluated and that you have not found major spills or releases – but you note that some sites do have damage. Can you explain what that means?
  - b. Do any of the superfund sites which have sustained damage require follow up?

- c. Is the lack of electricity causing problems with any of the sites – in particular, sites that rely on wells for pump and treat or other remedial systems?
- 9. Mr. Lopez, what about superfund sites, oils sites, and chemical facilities on the US Virgin Islands – have they been evaluated?
  - a. If so, what was the result of the evaluation and is there any follow up required?
- 10. There have been a number of press reports about people who are without clean drinking water, drinking from a well on a superfund site in Dorado, Puerto Rico – can you explain the situation there and whether it has been resolved?
  - a. Has EPA analyzed exactly what contaminants were present in the water and whether the water being consumed was safe for people to be drinking?
  - b. Are there any other places on the Island where this is an issue?
  - c. Was the Puerto Rican water utility the entity distributing the water from the Dorado site? Were they even aware that the water they were distributing was from a well that was part of the superfund program?
  - d. Isn't this an indicator of how unreliable other sources of drinking water are and how desperate people are for another source of drinking water?

○ **SOLID WASTE LANDFILLS / HAZARDOUS WASTE**

- 11. Mr. Lopez, prior to the hurricanes hitting Puerto Rico this season, most people would have characterized the municipal solid waste landfills as a mess even on a good day – with 19 of the 29 landfills operating out of compliance with Federal law – what is the status of the landfills in the wake of the hurricanes?

- a. What is EPA going to do to address the situation regarding the Subtitle D landfills in Puerto Rico?
  - b. Do you think that Puerto Rico should keep its delegation under Subtitle D?
  - c. Is debris removal going to further overload the already filled-to-capacity landfills?
- 12.Mr. Lopez, what is the Agency doing about hazardous waste, household hazardous waste, and medical waste that has found its way into the landfills in Puerto Rico?
- a. Has EPA been working with Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board to look at the landfills – both before and after the hurricanes?
- 13.Mr. Lopez, we are also concerned with debris removal in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Please explain the status of the debris removal.
- a. What is EPA doing about orphan containers including drums, tanks, canisters, cylinders and similar containers that were displaced by the hurricane and found floating in or washed up near waterways?
  - b. Your written testimony notes that EPA is working to support composting efforts but that you will be providing fine particle monitoring where local and state officials choose to burn woody debris. Can you give us a bit more information on that?

○ **CLEAN AIR ACT ISSUES**

- 14.Mr. Lopez, has EPA conducted air quality assessments in the impacted areas?
- a. If so, when and how many?
  - b. What have the results of those assessments been, generally?
- 15.Mr. Lopez, what is the status of the stationary air quality monitoring network sites in the impacted areas?

- a. If these monitors have been damaged or rendered inoperable, when do you anticipate getting them back online?
- b. If you are having to use other means of monitoring and measuring, such as portable and mobile collection devices, are you concerned about whether these samples are accurate and/or exemplary of air quality conditions throughout the regions?

○ **WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITIES**

16. Mr. Lopez, what is the status of the wastewater treatment plants in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands?

- a. Your written testimony notes that of the 800 pump stations in Puerto Rico, “about” 106 are overflowing sewage due to lack of power, malfunctioning generators or damage – what is the Agency doing about it?
- b. Your written testimony also notes that “many” of the wastewater plants on St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John are operating, though some plants and pump stations are damaged or blocked by storm debris – what is EPA doing about that?
- c. What is the impact of this sewage on source water for drinking water or, as Mrs. Rodriguez testifies on the next panel, backup into peoples’ showers and sinks?